

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 04049 160554Z

21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /043 W

----- 029533

R 160400Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4589

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 4049

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MOPS PFOR PINR HK VN RP

SUBJ: POSSIBLE NORTH VIETNAMESE GUNBOATS NEAR
PHILIPPINES

1. THE FOLLOWING HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED THROUGH
INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS BUT EVEN THOUGH IT SOUNDS FAR FETCHED
I THINK IT WORTHWHILE DRAW TO EMBASSY MANILA'S ATTENTION.
QUOTE

2. ON APRIL 14 AT 1445 HOURS USDLO ADVISED BY MANAGER OF
CHINA PACIFIC INTERMODAL LTD, A HONG KONG BASED SHIPPING/
SALVAGE COMPANY, THAT THEIR SALVAGE MASTER ON SCENE OF
GROUNDED MERSHIP "WINSON" AT NORTH DANGER REEF (1128N-
11425E) REPORTED FIRING BY NVN GUNBOATS NIGHT OF APRIL 13.
SALVAGE MASTER REPORTED SEVERAL NVN GUNBOATS IN AREA.
MSG FROM SALVAGE MASTER DID NOT SAY HOW HE IDENTIFIED
GUNBOATS AS NV, BUT DID SAY SHOUTING COULD BE HEARD IN
VIETNAMESE ON THE GUNBOATS.

3. ON APRIL 14 AT 1845 HOURS USDLO FURTHER ADVISED
THAT SALVAGE MASTER REPORTED THAT EARLY ON MORNING OF
APRIL 14 SEVERAL NVN GUNBOATS CAPTURED SOUTHWEST CAY OF
NORTH DANGER REEF. SALVAGE MASTER REPORTED PHILIPPINE
COMMANDER ON NORTHEAST CAY OF NORTH DANGER REEF INFORMED
OF SITUATION. SALVAGE MASTER SAID HE WAS WITHDRAWING FROM
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SCENE.

4. ON APRIL 15 AT 1130 HOURS USDLO WAS ADVISED THAT ON NIGHT OF APRIL 14 SALVAGE MASTER RETURNED TO SCENE TO CONTINUE SALVAGE OPERATIONS. FOUR NVN GUNBOATS CAME CLOSE ABOARD. SALVAGE MASTER ILLUMINATED HIS VESSEL TO DEMONSTRATE PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. SALVAGE VESSEL REPORTED TO BE FLYING PANAMANIAN FLAG. SHIP NAME IS "ENDURANCE." NVN GUNBOATS REMAINED WITHIN VISUAL RANGE AND DID NOT ATTACK.

5. DECISION MADE TO DISCONTINUE SALVAGE OPS. SALVAGE VESSEL ENDURANCE AND SMALLER COASTERS CLEARED AREA AT 0900 APRIL 15 ENROUTE MANILA. ETA UNKNOWN. LOCAL MANILA REPRESENTATIVE OF CHINA INTERMODAL PACIFIC IS MALAYSIAN TOWAGE AND SALVAGE.
UNQUOTE

6. PERHAPS SOMEONE COULD CHECK THIS WHOLE STORY OUT WITH MASTERS OF SALVAGE VESSELS, PARTICULARLY WHY THEY SEEM SO SURE GUNBOATS WERE NORTH VIETNAMESE.
CROSS

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NNN

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